

REVIEWS

the parallel passage Isa. 36:6 where we find four main clauses. In a project like this one, such differences are unavoidable, as is the fact that many demarcations are themselves questionable. On the one hand, the data in BH' appear to have been entered manually, which inevitably results in some degree of inconsistency (although, as stated, the editors of BH' have done a good job in this respect). On the other hand, many clauses are structurally ambiguous, a fact which cannot be sufficiently taken into account in a fixed database.

To sum up, I think that BH' deserves to function as a point of reference in further syntactic research in Biblical Hebrew. The demarcation of clauses is provocative in a positive way and it will certainly enrich the discussion on this already much-debated subject. On the other hand, the work may not be very influential as a statement on Hebrew morphology. Also as a database generally, BH' in its printed format has serious limitations. Perhaps a selection of biblical material containing all *genres* would have done as well.

FREE UNIVERSITY, AMSTERDAM

ARIAN J.C. VERHEIJ

REFERENCES

- H. Bauer and P. Leander, 1922. *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments*, Volume 1. Halle.
- Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle, 1968. *The Sound Pattern of English*. New York.
- Wolfgang Richter, 1983. *Transliteration und Transkription. Objekt- und metasprachliche Metazeichensysteme zur Wiedergabe hebräischer Texte*. (Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament). St. Ottilien.

WILLIAM W. HALLO, *The Book of the People* (Brown Judaic Studies 225). Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1991. Pp. x + 224. Price: \$59.95 hardback. ISBN: 1-55540-591-6.

This book is an outcome of work on a Commentary for the Pentateuch written for the American Hebrew Congregations (Reformed Judaism). The book consists of five introductory essays related to each of the five books of the Pentateuch plus five additional essays which are: (1) 'The Book of the People' that deals with the meaning of the title of the book. This involves problems of canon and their relation to cuneiform literary texts. (2) 'Approaches to the Study of the Pentateuch' in which the various trends of biblical research are discussed. (3) 'The Contextual Approach'. This represents the author's own approach: the use of comparison and contrast, i.e. appreciation of the common as well as the distinctive features of biblical research. (4) 'Biblical History in Contextual Perspective' — a sketch of biblical history from the contextual perspective. (5) 'Selections from Ancient Near-Eastern Literature'. This chapter, which serves the main purpose of the book, illuminates the Pentateuch by providing the ancient Near Eastern background for the pentateuchal traditions. In this chapter Hallo shows the connections of every book of the Pentateuch with the surrounding world.

In our review here we shall refer to some basic comparative points raised by Hallo and we will try to analyse and deepen their significance. In many cases we shall adduce additional evidence that strengthens Hallo's position. At the end of our review some critical remarks will be presented.

Let us start with the first book of the Pentateuch: Genesis. The main topics in Genesis chapters 1-11 are creation and the flood. These have a lot in common with the Mesopotamian epic: the creation myth is reflected in *Enuma elish* — not used by Hallo — and the flood in the eleventh chapter of *Gilgamesh*. However, there is

a significant difference between the biblical traditions and the mentioned Mesopotamian ones. In the book of Genesis creation is followed by the flood while in the two mentioned Mesopotamian traditions the creation epic and the flood story appear, each of them, in different literary works. This situation changed after the publishing of the epic of Atrahasis (W.G. Lambert and A.R. Millard, *Atra-hasis the Babylonian Story of the Flood*, Oxford 1969). In this epic creation precedes the story of the flood as in the Bible. This teaches us that the biblical primeval stories of creation and the flood stories should not be separated as was the case before the publishing of Atrahasis.

Another cycle of traditions in the book of Genesis that was influenced by the ancient Near East is to be found in the Joseph stories. As Hallo shows, the Joseph stories should be seen against the background of the Egyptian lore, especially 'the story of the two brothers' and the tradition of 'the seven lean years in Egypt'.

One wonders about the lack of parallels in the patriarchal traditions. However, as I have shown elsewhere (see now my book *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford 1993) these stories belong to the genre of foundation stories which were prevalent in the East-Mediterranean area and particularly among the Greeks.

The book of Exodus with covenant and covenantal commitments has a lot in common with covenant and law in Mesopotamia as indicated by Hallo. However, what we miss here is the parallel apodictic laws which are almost unknown in the Mesopotamian laws, but are found in the *Hittite instructions* for officers, priests, etc. One can even find in Ex. 23:1-3, 6-9 a series of apodictic instructions which overlap a Hittite section in the *Bel-Madgalti* instructions as shown in my article: 'The Origin of the Apodictic Law — An overlooked source', *Vetus Testamentum* 23 (1973), 63-75.

Another theme neglected by W.W. Hallo is Temple Building. W.W. Hallo has not brought any parallels to Exodus chapters 25-40 that deal with the construction of the Tabernacle. This topic constitutes a genre for itself in Mesopotamia and has recently been investigated in the monograph of V. Hurowitz, 'I have Built You an Exalted House', *Temple Building in the Bible in the Light of Mesopotamian and North-West Semitic Writings* (JSOT Supplement 115; Sheffield 1992).

The book of Leviticus has also been provided with parallels by Hallo. However, one misses here the Hittite material which has been discussed by me on several occasions. In my studies I refer to the Hittite cultic festivals that have very much in common with the Israelite cultic festivals. Thus we find there a series of sacrificial prescriptions which overlap the Israelite sacrificial prescriptions, as for example: 'one bull, seven lambs and one goat with groats and wine libation...' (Dincol and Darga, *Anatolica* 3 [1969-1970], p. 100). This has its parallels in the various cultic festival prescriptions of the books of Leviticus and Numbers, as for example in Lev. 23:18-19: 'seven lambs and one bull... and one goat... flour and wine libation', and Num. 29:2 ff.: 'one bull, one ram, seven lambs, one goat... flour and wine libation' (Num. 29:2 ff., 8-11, vv. 36-38).

Purity regulations for a childbearing woman (Lev. 12) are very similar to the prescriptions for the purification of a childbearing woman in the Hittite rituals. The purifications ceremony of the childbearing woman consists of the offering of a bird and/or lamb just as is prescribed in Lev. 12:6. (For all this, cf. M. Weinfeld, 'Social and Cultic Institutions in the Priestly Source Against the Ancient Near Eastern Background', *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Panel Session, Bible Studies and Hebrew Language, Jerusalem 1983, pp. 95-129).

As was indicated by W.W. Hallo, the book of Numbers contains various traditions rooted in the Ancient Near Eastern reality such as cities of refuge (cf. also my book *Justice and Righteousness in Israel and the National*, Jerusalem 1985, pp. 72-78), the ritual calendar, Hittite Instructions for Temple Officials. The most salient traditions in the book of Numbers that have their parallels in the Ancient Near East are the lists of censuses that appear at the beginning of the book (Chapters 1-4), and towards the end (Chapter 26). The list at the beginning pertains to the mobilization of the people to a military campaign while the second list in Chapter 26 is related to the division of land. Both purposes serve the census in Mari and in ancient Rome, and it should be indicated that in the traditions of census we find purificatory ceremonies that accompany the census. (See my article 'The Census in Mari, in Ancient Israel and in Ancient Rome', *Storia e Tradizioni di Israele, Scritti in Onore di J. Albert Soggin*, Brescia 1991, pp. 293-298).

The parallels to the book of Deuteronomy are well covered by the author. However, recent studies have shown an important genre represented in Deuteronomy which was neglected until now. I have in mind the literary type so called *Fürstenspiegel*, or *peri-basileias* in Greek, that contain instructions for the King, like those found in Deut. 17:14-20. This pericope has been broadly supplemented in the Qumran Temple scroll and has a striking parallel in the instructions to the Egyptian King as cited by Hecataeus of Abdera (300 BCE); see my article 'The Royal Guard According to the Temple Scroll', *Revue Biblique* 87 (1980), 394-396. The most instructive parallel to Kings' law in Deut. 17:14-20 is the so-called 'Advice to the Prince' in the Mesopotamian literature from the library of the Assyrian King Assurbanipal (7th cent. BCE). Here the king is warned to listen to his counsellors, not to covet money and not to mobilize the people of Nippur, Sippar and Babylon into the army. As has recently been demonstrated by E. Reiner ('The Babylonian Fürstenspiegel in Practice', *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East, Festschrift I.M. Diakonoff*, 1980, pp. 320 ff.) this text was canonical in Mesopotamia: we find it quoted in a middle-Babylonian text from the twelfth century BCE which says that the ancestors handed down this tradition where it is written that people of Nippur, Babylon and Sippar should not be mistreated. Furthermore, in a recently discovered letter to the King Esarhaddon of Assyria (689-670 BCE) the writer cites the rights of the cities of Sippar, Nippur and Babylon and says: 'Let the Lord of the Kings look up the tablet: "if the King does not give heed to justice" which overlaps verbally the beginning of the 'Advice to the Prince' of the Ashurbanipal library quoted above.

And now a few critical remarks:

1. The Story of Sinuhe in Palestine (p. 152, selection 42) is related by Hallo to Num. 13:23, 27, verses that speak about the fertility of the land, a feature which is more relevant to the description of the land in Deut. 8:8. Now, this Egyptian story has clear affinities with the story about the flight of Moses from Egypt and the shelter he found in the house of Jethro (Ex. 2:15-22). Like Sinuhe, Moses finds shelter in the house of a nomadic sheikh (Ammunenshi) who marries him to his daughter and does with him good (= promise based on pledge, compare Num. 10:29, 31; 1 Sam. 5:6); see my article: 'The Tribal League at Sinai', *Ancient Israelite Religion (Essays in Honor of F.M. Cross)*, edited by P.D. Millar, P.D. Hanson and S.D. MacBride, Philadelphia 1987, pp. 303-314).

2. Giving the tithe from grain, beer and sheep (p. 159, sec. 52, 3) as grant to the privileged and their descendants found in Ugarit, is reflected in Num. 18:21-32 and not in Deut. 14:22-29; see my article 'The Covenant of Grant in the Old Tes-

tament and in the Ancient Near East', *JAOS* 90 (1970), 202-203; Art. 'Tithe', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, v. 15, 1156-1162.

3. Marking the covenant by passing through the pieces is not paralleled by the Hittite ritual when the army is defeated, as Hallo has it (p. 130, selection 13). The Hittite ritual rather belongs to the apotropaic ceremony of the census, see my article 'The Census in Mari, in Ancient Israel and Ancient Rome', *Scritti in onore di J.A. Soggin*, Roma 1991.

4. The text from Mari mentioned on p. 162 is relevant to the ecstatic movement that accompanies prophecy (arising on one's feet) and prophesying (see my article 'Ancient Near Eastern Patterns of Israelite Prophecy', *VT* 27 [1977], 231-252), and has nothing to do with Deut. 21:10-14. On the other hand, an important parallel not mentioned by Hallo is a Mari prophecy that is concerned with the primacy of morality and thus is very close in spirit to Israelite Prophecy. It is found in a letter recently discussed by A. Malamat ('A Mari Prophecy and Nathan's Dynastic Oracle', *Essays presented to G. Fohrer on his sixty-fifth birthday*, Berlin 1980, pp. 73 ff.; cf. M. Anbar, 'Aspect moral dans un discours "Prophétique" de Mari', *UF* 7 [1975], 517-518). For the significance of this prophecy, see my notes in *Shnaton* 5 (1981), 233 ff. There we read: 'Am I not Adad, Lord of Halab... I never demand anything of you. When a wronged man or woman cries out to you, stand up and just do justice to him. That is what I demand from you', which recalls Ex. 22:20-23, Jer. 21:12, 22:3 and Mic. 6:8.

In sum we have before us a very good companion for the Pentateuch as related to Ancient Near Eastern texts, but since the Ancient Near Eastern texts are constantly growing by new discoveries, the topic cannot be finalized, but should be left open for further investigation.

JERUSALEM

M. WEINFELD

MARY PHIL KORSACK (tr.), *At the Start: Genesis Made New. A Translation of the Hebrew Text*. Doubleday, New York 1993. Pp. xi + 237. ISBN: 0-385-47180-7.

Translations of the Hebrew Bible have to focus on two sorts of issues; issues of exegesis on the one hand, and issues of presentation on the other. Clearly, these are closely intertwined. The text cannot be presented until some sort of understanding has been achieved and selected, and yet the exegesis too cannot remain in a vacuum, and must take on form, if only for its own clarification. Nevertheless, translators, particularly those of the modern era, standing on the backs of so many earlier translations, comments, analyses, philological, archaeological, historical and literary, will either want to grapple with the problem of more precise rendition or of literary equivalence.

This new version falls into the second category. Although, there are some after-notes in the form of a 'Translator's Postscript', offering some sort of a justification, these are of a perfunctory nature. They can, in fact, be downright misleading and even internally inaccurate or self-contradictory. The explanation of what has become the title, replacing the more familiar 'Genesis', or the opening, 'In the beginning', suggests that the word 'start' has a semantic range based on physical extent, 'a space', as well as temporality. This is only partially true, and also not sufficiently distinguished from the common 'beginning'. The effect is of course to surprise and then to shock, to defamiliarise, in Shklovsky's terminology. But questions then arise from this lexical selection. Is it more accurate as a representation of the Hebrew? Is it a more suitable word in the context of the target language? It seems that on both counts our reactions must be negative. There are abiding problems in the understanding of the original text, because of the inherent difficulty of Hebrew,